

MOTION BY SUPERVISOR DON KNABE

Since 1901, the County has administered and funded the General Relief program to provide temporary cash aid to indigent adults and certain sponsored immigrants, who are ineligible for federal or State programs. In FY 2007-08, the County spent a total of \$161 million in cash assistance for approximately 63,000 General Relief (GR) participants each month. For FY 2009-10, the present economic environment will significantly increase demand for cash assistance to over 71,000 persons aided each month. It is estimated that the FY 2009-10 GR program cost to Los Angeles County will rise to \$200 million.

I believe we need to explore more effective ways to serve this population that is consistent with state laws governing the General Relief program but go beyond provision of what many agree is an inadequate monthly stipend and instead focus the program more on helping individuals improve their lives – in particular the estimated 80% of the current caseload that is considered to be “unemployable.” We should also look at more creative, innovative ways of funding this program to better direct it towards outcomes, looking at the Title IVE waiver that the Department of Children and Family Services obtained from the federal government as an example, as well as the “Care Not Cash” program implemented by the City/County of San Francisco several years ago. We should also ensure that the program design continue to be closely aligned to existing services related to preventing homelessness, such as the General Relief

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Housing Subsidy and Case Management Program, which is a part of the Homeless Prevention Initiative (HPI) created by this Board in 2006.

Restructuring this program would likely be more cost-effective to the County. More importantly, it would result in far better long-term outcomes for those on the caseload who have been on aid the longest and are the ones who are stuck in a vicious cycle of indigence.

I THEREFORE MOVE THAT THE BOARD instruct the Chief Executive Office (CEO) in collaboration with the Department of Public Social Services (DPSS) and consultation with County Counsel to report back on program design for a potential General Relief Program that will better assist participants towards greater self-sufficiency, with the expectation that these individuals would be able to transition off of County assistance, including more targeted efforts to increase the number of participants who receive early SSI approvals, opportunities to prepare for employment, the use of housing subsidies and case management as a possible alternative to cash payments, and report back in 60 days.

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